



4

God Preserves His Word

Key Themes

- The Old Testament is God's Word.
- God has preserved His Word.

Key Passages

- Luke 24:25–27; Jeremiah 36:1–4, 36:16–32

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify one way God has shown that He has preserved His Word.
- Describe how Jesus affirms the authority of the Old Testament.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Students will place bookmarks at Luke 24 and Jeremiah 36.
Students will arrange the Books of the Bible cards in order.



Studying God's Word

page 5

God has protected His Word for thousands of years, and He will be faithful to continue to do so.



Activity 1: Interview with Baruch

page 9

Students will review the passage by hearing a reporter interview the scribe Baruch about how he took dictation from Jeremiah.



Activity 2: Race a Verse

page 10

Students will practice the memory verse by playing a game to arrange the Memory Verse strips in order.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Cut strips of paper for each student to mark Luke 24 and Jeremiah 36 in their Bibles.
- If you did not do this last week, print (preferably on cardstock) and cut apart the Books of the Bible cards. A template for all the books of the Bible is on the Resource DVD-ROM, Lesson 3. Prepare one set of cards for every 3 to 5 students. Store in envelopes.

- Strips of paper for each student
- Books of the Bible cards—one set for every 3–5 students, in envelopes



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



INTERVIEW WITH BARUCH

- Print two copies of the Interview with Baruch script from Resource DVD-ROM.
- Optional prop: faux microphone: make by covering an empty bathroom tissue roll with foil; glue a ball of foil in one end.
- Optional: provide simple period costumes for the two actors—robes, rope belts, head coverings, etc.

- Interview scripts
- Optional: microphone
- Optional: simple period costumes for the two actors—robes, rope belts, head coverings, etc.
- Optional clipboard for reporter



RACE A VERSE

- Print one copy of the Memory Verse strips from the Resource DVD-ROM, preferably on cardstock. Cut the strips apart.

- Memory Verse strips
- Poster putty



Memory Verse

Psalms 19:7–9 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

To prepare your heart and mind, study these passages: Luke 24:13–27; 2 Chronicles 34:14–32; Jeremiah 36.

The Old Testament begins God's Word—the history of the universe. It contains 39 books and tells us about ancient Israel and God's promise of the Messiah. This precious history has been revealed and preserved for us since the beginning of time.

One dramatic biblical episode of God preserving His word begins in 2 Chronicles 34 during King Josiah's reign over Judah near the beginning of the seventh century BC. Josiah began a period of reformation in Judah. The people before him had completely turned away from God. But Josiah did what was right in the sight of the Lord (2 Chronicles 34:2). The house of the Lord had been desecrated and Josiah commanded that it be repaired (2 Chronicles 34:8). It was during this restoration of the temple that Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses (2 Chronicles 34:14). When Josiah heard the Word of the Lord read he was convicted of the idolatry and sin in the land. He tore his clothes in repentance (2 Chronicles 34:19). Because of Josiah's tender heart and humble spirit before God when he heard the words, God's judgment was withheld from Judah for the time (2 Chronicles 34:27–28).

However, when Josiah's son Jehoiakim became king, the people once again turned their backs on God and His Word. This is when the Word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:1) and he was instructed by the Lord to write the words of judgment against Israel and Judah and all the nations (Jeremiah 36:2). Jeremiah dictated God's Word as Baruch wrote the scroll (Jeremiah 36:4). When the scroll was finished and read to King Jehoiakim, he was not afraid, repentant, or humble before the Lord as his father had been (Jeremiah 36:24). Instead, Jehoiakim destroyed the Word of God by casting the scroll into the fire piece by piece as it was being read (Jeremiah 36:22–23).

But was King Jehoiakim able to destroy God's Word even with fire? No. God will always preserve His Word and did so then. He called Jeremiah again and instructed that yet another scroll be written. Jeremiah took the scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe who wrote on it. It contained all the words (and more) of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire (Jeremiah 36:32).

God has always been and will always be faithful to

preserve His Word. In the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

And in the words of the psalmist, "The entirety of Your Word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever" (Psalm 119:160).

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

You may encounter people who don't necessarily feel that the Old Testament is significant to today's culture. It is, however, the Word of God. And God has taken great strides to preserve it in order to reveal His truth and plan of redemption completely.

As we study our Lord's life recorded in the New Testament, we see One who relied on the truth and promises of the Old Testament. Indeed, Jesus placed such a high value on the inspired Word of God that even He—the very Son of God, the Messiah—willingly submitted Himself to its authority while on earth. He relied on it to resist the temptations of Satan (Matthew 4), and He read from it when He taught in the synagogues. In fact, He was reading from the Old Testament book of Isaiah when He proclaimed that He was the Messiah who fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 4:16–21).

On the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13), after His Resurrection, the Lord admonished his companions to believe the prophets (Luke 24:25). And as they walked, Jesus taught them from the Scriptures, beginning at the writings of Moses and all through the Prophets, the things concerning Him—that He was the one sent to redeem Israel (Luke 24:21). Jesus Christ studied, taught, obeyed, and lived the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Because He held them in such high regard, we should as well.

We do well to remember His words to Satan during His temptation, "It is written, 'Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

God has preserved His Word for thousands of years. And He has been gracious to leave historical evidence that confirms the Bible. We know that the ancient Hebrews relied on Scripture. They recognized the inspiration of certain texts and depended on them for wisdom.

The five books of Moses, beginning with Genesis, were written around 1500 BC and chronicle the his-

tory of the earth over the previous 2,500 years. After that, the remaining books were written by prophets and scribes. These holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19–21). The words were recorded on scrolls and carefully transmitted through the generations with painstaking diligence to ensure their accuracy. The final record from the Old Testament prophets came at the hand of Malachi. His prophecy of the coming Prophet (Malachi 3–4) begins a period of 400 years of silence before John the Baptist proclaimed the arrival of Christ.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered at Qumran in 1947, gave rise to additional confirmation of these ancient texts. This finding presented Old Testament manuscripts dated as early as 150 BC. These manuscripts were written nearly 1,000 years before other manuscripts already discovered, and proved to be the same as those previously found.

For example, a copy of the book of Isaiah was part of the findings at Qumran dated about 150 BC. Prior to this, the oldest dated manuscript of the book of Isaiah was around AD 980. Yet when these two copies of Isaiah were compared they were found to be 95 percent accurate to the Hebrew Bible.

This evidence of ancient Old Testament Hebrew texts together with the astounding number—more than 24,000—of partial and complete manuscript copies of the New Testament give us solid historical background to the reliability of the Bible. Biblical scholars have

agreed that the number of manuscripts supporting the Bible provide unparalleled authentication of the original documents. In fact, the Bible has more documentation to verify it than any other book of antiquity that is commonly accepted.

For those of us with faith to believe, these findings serve as confirmation that we worship a mighty God who does not change. He speaks to us through the consistently preserved Scriptures so we can know Him, His character, His purpose, and His plan to redeem a people to Himself for all eternity.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Father, please enable me to give the Bible the same honor and authority over my life that it had over Christ's life and ministry. I know that you gave me your Word so that I could be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work. Please help me prepare for this class so that the students will be moved to honor your Word. Develop in them a passion that will lead them to a spirit of humility and obedience toward the Scriptures. Thank you for faithfully preserving your Word from all attacks.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- Have them place a bookmark in their Bibles at Luke 24 and Jeremiah 36.
- Provide envelopes containing cards with the names of the books of the Bible for groups of three to five students. Students are to place the books in the proper order. They can use the Books of the Bible poster or their own Bibles to confirm the right order. If time allows, have them do it a second time without looking at the poster or their Bible.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Wouldn't it be interesting to hear from one of the men God inspired to write the Bible? Well, we're going to do that very thing today.

As we study today, we are going to see that the Old Testament is God's Word, and that God has used amazing ways to preserve His Word. First we're going to see that Jesus Christ Himself believed the Old Testament was God's Word—He knew it, studied it, and taught from it.

The passage we are going to read first comes from Luke 24. This happened after Jesus's Resurrection. He was still on earth and making Himself known to His disciples. Jesus approached two men who were walking along the road away from Jerusalem. Jesus saw that they were very unhappy so He asked them why. They didn't recognize Jesus. As they walked, the men told Jesus about what had happened in Jerusalem, that the one they had hoped would one day redeem Israel—the Messiah—had been killed. They told Him about the crucifixion, the burial, and the Resurrection. Of course, Jesus already knew all these things, but He was silent as He listened to them.

OK. That sets the stage. Let's read Luke 24:25–27. *Choose three readers to read one verse each.*

Luke 24:25–27

EXAMINE THE WORD

Keep your eyes on those verses while we answer some very important questions about them.

Observe the Text

- ? What did Jesus think of these men? Look in verse 25. What did He call them? *Foolish, slow to believe.*
- ? That's right. They were slow to believe. Who weren't they believing? Look in verse 25. *The prophets.*

That's right. Now look at verse 27. Someone read that again. *Have someone read.*

- ? Who does this verse refer to? *Jesus.*
- ? Does anyone know what "expound" means? *Allow children to answer.*

It means to interpret, explain, or teach. Jesus was teaching these men.

- ? What was Jesus teaching these men? *The Scriptures.*

Right. This verse says that Jesus taught the men beginning at the writings of Moses and all through the Prophets. He was teaching the Scriptures as He knew them. He was teaching them from the Old Testament.

Discover the Truth

Look here at the Books of the Bible poster. All of these books are part of the Old Testament. These are the same books—the Scriptures—that Jesus taught from. Jesus knew that all of these books were God's Word.

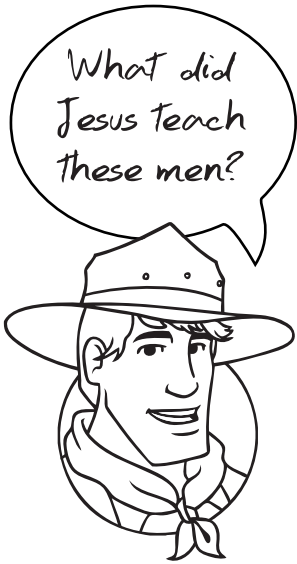
Now take a look at our timeline for a minute. Jesus was teaching about the Scriptures written by Moses beginning in Genesis all the way through to Malachi who was the last Old Testament Prophet. *Show the time frame of the Old Testament on the Seven C's Timeline.*

- ? Do you think Jesus had a Bible to teach from? *No/yes.*

Well, He didn't have a Bible like we know of it. He had learned from the ancient scrolls—written by Moses, the Prophets, and scribes who copied all the things down beginning with creation and ending with this time of silence when there were no prophets. *Refer to the Seven C's Timeline again.*

But we do have the Bible. And the books we find in the Old Testament are the same books Jesus taught from when He was on earth. Jesus trusted these writings and knew they were God's Word.

The fact that Jesus trusted the Old Testament can give us confidence that we can trust it, too. It is an important part of God's Word.



Expound:
interpret,
explain, or
teach

READ THE WORD

Now we're going to read and study the Old Testament ourselves. Jesus believed the Old Testament was God's Word. And this account will show us how God amazingly preserves His Word. *Again, refer to the timeline and show the children when some of the Old Testament books were written. Long, long ago. Yet God has preserved it.*

This event takes place when Jehoiakim was the king of Judah. The people of Israel at that time were wicked and sinful. They had no respect for God. They did not fear Him, worship Him, or have any desire to obey Him.

During this time God spoke to His prophet Jeremiah. Everyone turn to Jeremiah 36 in your Bibles and we are going to see what God wanted Jeremiah to do and say to these wicked sinful people.

EXAMINE THE WORD

- ? Who would like to read the passage from Jeremiah 36:1–4? *Pick someone to read. If desired, note student answers on the board while observing the following text.*

Jeremiah 36:1–4

OK. Everyone stay at Jeremiah 36. I'm going to ask some Herman Euticus questions—and we are going to see what God wants us to know. Then we'll read some more of this exciting account of God preserving His Word.

Observe the Text

- ? Who was the king at this time? *King Jehoiakim.*
- ? Whose son is King Jehoiakim? *King Josiah.*
- ? Good! Who did the Lord's Word come to? See verse 1. *Jeremiah.*
- ? What did God command Jeremiah to do? *To write on a scroll the things God had spoken against Israel, Judah, and all the nations.*
- ? What was God hoping His Words would do? *Bring the people to repentance and God would then forgive them for their sinfulness.*

This was the job of the prophets—to warn God's people to turn back to Him or to face His punishment. God spoke through the prophets. They spoke and wrote just what God wanted them to.

- ? What did Jeremiah ask Baruch to do? You can find this answer in verse 4. *Write down on a scroll the words the Lord gave to Jeremiah.*

After Baruch wrote down the warning that God had given to Jeremiah, he went to read the Words of the Lord to the people. Even the princes of the land heard about what Baruch was reading. They told him to come into their court and read the scroll—the very Word of the Lord—to them. Of course, Baruch did what he was told—and we'll see that the people did not like what Baruch was reading.



Jeremiah 36:16–17

Now I want you to listen carefully as I read. Follow in your Bibles. I'm going to read verses 16–17. *Wait until all the children are ready, then read the text.*

- ? How did these people feel after hearing the very Words of God? Look again in verse 16. *They were afraid.*

They wanted to know if these words were really from Jeremiah—the great prophet. These words from Jeremiah were the very Word of God and they were words that warned the people—and even the king—that they would be judged by God if they did not turn away from their sins.

When King Jehoiakim heard about the scroll, he asked to see it. He demanded that someone read it to him. Let's read what happens next!

Jeremiah 36:22–23

- ? Who would like to read verses 22 and 23? *Choose a student to read.*
- ? Where did this take place? *In the king's winter house.*
- ? How was King Jehoiakim keeping warm? *It's in verse 22. He had a fire going in the fireplace.*
- ? Who read the scroll to King Jehoiakim? *A man named Jehudi.*
- ? What did the king do as Jehudi read the scroll to him? *He cut the scroll with his knife and threw it in the fire!*
- ? Well, do you suppose that King Jehoiakim could really destroy God's very words—the words that He gave to Jeremiah? *No!*

Jeremiah 36:27–32

I'm going to read verses 27 through 32. Everyone turn there and listen as I read. *Read verses.*

- ? What happened to Jeremiah in verse 27? *The Word of the Lord came to him again.*
- ? What did God tell Jeremiah to do? *To take another scroll and write all of God's words again.*

That's right. The king could not destroy God's Word.

- ? And what did God say He would do to Jehoiakim for burning the scroll? *He would have no heir to sit on the throne; his body would be thrown outside; and judgment would come upon his household and all of Judah.*

God judged those who tried to destroy His Word, and God preserved His Word by having Baruch write down all the words of the scroll as Jeremiah dictated to him.

Discover the Truth

- ? Why do you think King Jehoiakim took God's Word and threw it into the fire? *Allow children to answer.*

King Jehoiakim was a sinful man. God’s Word was accusing him of his sinfulness and telling him that God would one day judge him. The king wanted nothing to do with God or the truth of His Word.

? **What does this picture remind you of?** *Show the Lesson Theme poster. That God preserves His Word. It cannot be destroyed—even with fire!*

And we’ve just heard of an eyewitness account of how the Scriptures were written—destroyed—and written again! God protected His Word.

There have been different times in history when wicked rulers thought they could get rid of the Bible. They have gathered up Bibles and thrown them in the fire. They have punished people for owning a Bible. And yet, the Bible is still with us today because God protected His Word. In spite of all destructive efforts in the past, we still have the same Word from God.



Interview with Baruch

MATERIALS

- Interview scripts for Baruch and Reporter
- Optional: Clipboard, faux microphone, and period costumes

INSTRUCTIONS

Run copies of the Interview with Baruch script from the Resource DVD-ROM. Ask for two volunteer actors. Give clipboard and microphone to reporter. Tell the reporter that you’ll introduce him, and then he will ask Baruch questions about writing the first scroll.

Let’s review what we learned today with a skit. I need two volunteers—one to be Baruch and the other to be a Jerusalem reporter. *Pick two actors.*

Today we have reporter *[insert student’s name]* reporting all the way from Jerusalem. He has just tracked down Baruch, son of Neriah, who had a near-disastrous encounter with the king. Listen to this amazing story. Take it away *[insert student’s name]*.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Thank you, Mr. Reporter and Baruch, for that interesting interview! That was an eyewitness account of how God will not allow His Word to be destroyed. It has survived for thousands of years—and will continue to survive. *Refer to the Seven C’s Timeline as you indicate the expanse of time that has gone by since the beginning—Genesis.*





Race a Verse Game

MATERIALS

- Memory Verse strips with poster putty on the back of each strip

INSTRUCTIONS

Our memory verse comes from the very important Old Testament and it explains why God’s Word is so valuable to us. I have a challenge for you that will help you with memorizing the passage.

Mix up the order of the Memory Verse strips. Pass one strip per student. When you say “Go,” have students work together to arrange the strips in the correct order on the board or wall using poster putty. Allow them to refer to the Memory Verse poster.

Take the Memory Verse strips from the wall and repeat this several times allowing all the students to participate. You may want to divide the class into teams and see who can put the verse together the fastest. Read the passage each time the strips are put up on the wall or board. When finished, see who can recite the passage without looking at anything.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As you memorize this verse, you will learn the results of hearing and obeying God’s Word. Remember, Jesus Himself taught from the Scriptures—beginning at the writings of Moses and all through the Prophets. He believed the Old Testament

and taught from it. This gives us confidence to believe it, too!



Applying God’s Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

We started in the New Testament today—in the book of Luke. We discovered that Jesus based all of His teaching on the Old Testament. The Old Testament is the part of the Bible written before Jesus’s birth. And it is what Jesus Himself studied and taught from. Even after He rose from the dead, Jesus continued to teach His disciples the truth from the Scriptures. He taught from these Scriptures beginning at the writings of Moses and all through the Prophets. His trust in the Old Testament can give us the same trust and confidence in this very important part of God’s Word. Because Jesus believed it, we must believe it, too.

And we know that God’s Word cannot be destroyed. Take a look again at this timeline. Genesis was written by Moses—and included the history of the universe beginning way back with creation—thousands of years ago.

The Old Testament includes 4,000 years of history—history God wants us to know and believe.

And we heard today how it couldn't be destroyed by an evil king even though he tried to burn it up. God just called on Jeremiah to write it down again. God's Word cannot be destroyed! He has preserved it for thousands of years and no one will be able to destroy it or get rid of it.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Well, we know that God's Word cannot be destroyed, not even by evil King Jehoiakim who tried to burn it up! And we know that God is more powerful than any king.

We also know that Jesus believed all of the Old Testament. In fact, that is what He taught from. So, if someone tries to tell you that the Old Testament isn't true or isn't very important, you can tell him that if Jesus believed it, so do you! If Jesus was teaching from it—you can, too. If Jesus learned from it—you can learn, too!

You know, if it wasn't important, God wouldn't have protected it and kept it just the same all these thousands of years. The Old Testament is a very important part of God's Word. Don't ever let anyone tell you it isn't.



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 19:7–9

The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for being omnipotent.
- Thank Him for His Word.
- Praise God that His Word is sufficient.
- Ask for God's help to learn from the Word and to remember to use it to guide others.

